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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the varying definitions of civic education through time. The essay provides a framework through which to view the 1916 seminal report of the National Education Association's Committee on Social Studies by examining the competing visions of civic education during the 18 years prior to the report. The conceptualizations of civic education are divided into: (1) substantive civic education; (2) valuative civic education; (3) practical/participatory civic education; and (4) civic education as community civics. Analyses support each of the divisions. (EH)

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Perspectives on Civic Education 1898-1916

THOMAS S.
VONTZ

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Thomas S. Vontz

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INTRODUCTION

A topic of philosophical debate for centuries, civic education in a democracy remains an ambiguous concept. Politicians, political philosophers, and educators have historically recognized the importance of an educated citizenry but have disagreed about the nature and function of education in a democracy. Not surprisingly, many American founders were concerned about the role of education in a republic in which citizens would possess ultimate sovereignty.[1] Although a traditional purpose of formal and informal education in the United States, the birth of "modern civics"[2] corresponds largely to the release of the 1916 seminal report of the National Education Association's Committee on the Social Studies.[3] The civic purposes of education, especially in the social studies, remains in focus. The statements below attempt to define the social studies and its goals in 1916 and 1994 respectively:

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[1]For an excellent variety of historical statements on education by important American politicians and journalists see United States Bureau of Education, *Expressions on Education*, United States Bureau of Education, Bulletin, 1913, no. 28, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1913).

[2]The word "modern" is descriptive for at least two reasons. Emerging conceptions of civic education from 1898-1916 were modern in that scholars and practitioners began to discuss civic education as a purposive part of the curriculum rather than an incidental outcome of formal schooling or living in the United States. Secondly, use of the word modern is also descriptive in that many of the debates as to what constitutes a good citizen or the educational program that would further the cause of citizenship continue to the present. For a brief description of civic education from 1790 to 1900 see Frederick R. Smith and John J. Patrick, "Civics. Relating Social Study to Social Reality," eds. C. Benjamin Cox and Byron Massialas, *Social Studies in the United States. A Critical Appraisal* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967), 105-106.

[3]*Report of the Committee on Social Studies of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education of the National Education Association. The Social Studies in Secondary Education*, compiled by Arthur William Dunn, United States Bureau of Education Bulletin, 1916, no. 28. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1916). This committee was part of a more comprehensive study of the secondary curriculum undertaken by the National Education Association known as the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education.

> The social studies are understood to be those whose subject matter relates directly to the organization and development of human society, and to man as a member of social groups. . . .More specifically, the social studies of the American high school should have as their conscious purpose the cultivation of good citizenship.[4]

> Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. . . .The primary purpose of the social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse democratic society.[5]

The development of ideas that finally made their way into the 1916 report came from a variety of sources and were influenced by thinking in education, in the social sciences, and by events and historical developments in the nation at large. Looking at the 18 years that preceded the report, this essay attempts to provide a framework through which to view competing visions of civic education prior to the seminal report of 1916.

Establishing a conceptual framework through which to view a period of history or an idea may be as troubling as it is useful. Attempting to form generalizations or identify similarities between complex theoretical positions does not allow for many clear or straight lines. Theories overlap and dissect one another to an extent that reasonable people could disagree about the connection or contradiction among them. At their best, conceptual frameworks help people sort through complicated and confusing material--an organizational device with distinct limitations. At their worst, conceptual frameworks allow people to pigeonhole ideas without fully investing the time and energy complex ideas deserve.

Conceptual frameworks are not an educational or a historical panacea. This may be

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[4] *Committee on Social Studies*, 9.

[5] National Council for the Social Studies, *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for the Social Studies* (Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies), 3.

especially true of a conceptual framework intended to untangle the concept of civic education during the first part of the 20th century. As the social studies as a subject in school and its civic purpose gained momentum, scholars from its various disciplines attempted to define the social studies, its civic purpose, and its relationship to their individual discipline or to society at large. The result was a complex mix of philosophical, political, sociological, and educational ideas. What follows is offered as an attempt to provide some clarity to emerging constructions of civic education as an important purpose of the social studies and of education in the United States.

CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF CIVIC EDUCATION 1898-1916

Conceptualizations of civic education from 1898 to 1916 share many common traits. All, of course, reiterated citizenship education as an important part of, if not the most important justification for, public, compulsory schooling in a democracy. Scholars representing most of the social sciences were convinced that civic education was especially important as the rapidly changing society demanded a new kind of citizenship or at least a renewed investment in civic education. Articles and books crossing ideological boundaries elevated civic education in light of increasing industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and individualization. Although they may have disagreed as to what constituted a properly conceived civic education, they generally agreed that it must include a new kind of pedagogy. The time had come to discard the dry-as-dust old pedagogy and replace it with something new.

However, as scholars attempted to provide meaning to citizenship or the role of education in developing good citizens, disagreements emerged. Directly or indirectly scholars attempted to

answer questions that have concerned democratic governments throughout history.[6] For example: What constitutes a good citizen? What is the relationship of the individual to society in a liberal democracy? Who shares in the responsibility for educating citizens? What should a well-conceived civic education program consist? Against the backdrop of the emerging social science disciplines, the movement toward social study as a subject in school, and a rapidly changing society, scholars and practitioners attempted to fill civic or citizenship education with more precise meaning. It was in this context that modern civic education was born.

The discourse about civic education can be separated, at least initially, into three distinct conceptual categories and a few subcategories.[7] The lines between concepts are fuzzy, gray, and at times tangled, but the framework does identify points of emphasis for those attempting a more precise definition of civic education. For at least one, and arguably the largest group of scholars, the key to a properly conceived civic education program rested on identifying the right substance through which to teach good citizenship. Good citizens were the result of teaching the right subjects; if the substance of the curriculum was carefully chosen and organized. A second group did not stress substance as much as it did the value or the spirit of democratic citizenship. For proponents of this construct, a properly conceived civic education program rested on instilling the values and morals of good citizenship. This group was concerned, no matter what content was chosen, that the habits of the "right character" were impressed upon students. They did not deny that some content or substance would be required to accomplish such a goal, but in their view the

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[6]For an excellent discussion of the historic philosophical debate concerning the relationship of education and democracy see Thomas L. Pangle, *The Ennobling of Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

[7]See Appendix 1 for a conceptual map of the entire framework.

substance was secondary to the values, morals, and spirit that the substance conveyed. A third group emphasized that citizenship education in a democracy was cultivating in students a way of thinking and living more democratically. A properly constituted education, not just civic education, would concern itself with transmitting the process or social organization associated with living in a democracy. A civic education was one that permeated the entire school and allowed students to experience democratic living.

Finally, derived from elements of the various constructs on civic education that came before it, a fourth conception surfaced in the decade before 1916. Scholars and practitioners began to expand their vision of an appropriately conceived civic education. Citizenship in a complex society meant that civic education was also complex and involved a variety of considerations. As conceptions of civic education began to expand, they eventually coalesced around the "community civics movement." The community civics movement specifically addressed several of the disputes over civic education and contained clear substantive, valuative, and practical elements. Community civics, then, represents a form of synthesis of the various perspectives on civic education prior to the movement.

Substantive Civic Education

As the formal study of pedagogy and the curriculum became increasingly important and popular, scholars interested in education pressured the disciplines to justify their existence in a properly conceived primary and secondary education.[8] Articles appeared in educational

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[8]For an account of the relative importance of the American curriculum as a topic of considerable interest among a wide range of scholars see Herbert M. Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893-1958*, 2nd ed., (New York: Routledge, 1995), 1-25.

publications and other scholarly journals that argued for the relative value of one discipline or another.[9] Tradition alone, although historically a powerful force in education, would not satisfy the most ardent critics. A wide range of scholars and practitioners entered the curricular debate attempting to defend and justify various elements of the curriculum.

Initially, the debates concerning a properly conceived civic education focused on finding the right content through which to teach good citizenship. Although some historians and political scientists doubted the worth of even attempting to teach patriotism in the schools, others believed that the values of citizenship would naturally flow from appropriately chosen content.[10] In either case, the values or morals associated with good citizenship were not the focus of civic education for the large group emphasizing substance. The answer to a properly constructed civic education seemed to hinge, initially, on identifying the proper historical study, the proper study of modern government, the proper study of society, or some combination of substantive knowledge that would lead to good citizenship.

Civic Education Through the Study of History

Many historians fell back on historic purposes to claim for their discipline the proper place in the curriculum. Prior to the 1890s it was assumed that, among other important outcomes resulting from learning history, one was inculcation of the knowledge and values that led to good

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[9]See, for example, V.K. Froula, "The Scope and Value of History in the High School," in *The Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Forty-Seventh Annual Convention of the National Education Association*, (Winona, MN: The Association, 1909), 507-511.

[10]For a discussion of the value of teaching or instilling patriotism see "Report of the Conference on the Teaching of History in Elementary Schools," by James Alton James, chairman, in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1906*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1906), 86-104.

citizenship.[11] This is not to say that other disciplines or the school itself did not, explicitly or incidentally, add to this goal. Rather, the emergence of historical study as a large part of the curriculum[12] required major justifications, and many defenders turned to the schools' civic purposes. Responding to the curricular challenges of the 1890s, the American Historical Association (AHA) convened a committee in 1896 to ". . .consider the subject of history in the secondary schools and to draw up a scheme of college-entrance requirements in history."[13] The Committee of Seven, consisting of six members from the university and one secondary teacher, reported its conclusions in 1898.[14] Feeling increasing pressure from scholars in other social sciences to separate the study of civics from history, the committee concluded:

> Much time will be saved and better results obtained if history and civil government be studied in large measure together, as one subject rather than two distinct subjects. . .To know the present form of our institutions well one should know whence they came and how they developed.[15]

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[11]The promotion of good citizenship through the study of history was apparently not limited to the study of American history. Many secondary curriculums prior to 1900 (including the one produced by the American Historical Association's Committee of Seven in 1898) included a large portion of European history. In fact, the Committee of Seven report emphasized the need and value of studying the history of other political systems to gain insight into the system of government in the United States. See "The Study of History in the Schools, Being the Report of the American Historical Association by the Committee of Seven," by Andrew McGlaughlin, chairman, in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1898*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1899), 427-564.

[12]*Report of the Committee* [of Ten] *on Secondary School Studies* [to the National Education Association] (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1893), 162-203. The NEA's Committee of Ten placed increased emphasis on the study of history by recommending four full years of historical study in the high school. See the section on "History, Civil Government, and Political Economy," 162-203. Others, like Charles McMurry who identified history as a unifying discipline, added to the relative importance of the study of history in the schools. See Charles A. McMurry, *The Elements of General Method, Based on the Principles of Herbart*, 9th ed. (Bloomington, IL: Public School Publishing Company), 1901.

[13]"Committee of Seven," AHA, 429.

[14]Of the six university members on the committee four had been secondary history teachers.

[15]"Committee of Seven," AHA, 471.

Attempting to fend off sharp criticism for four full years of historical study in the secondary schools that was initiated earlier by the Committee of Ten, the Committee of Seven also recommended, to the extent that a majority of schools still required four full years of historical study in the secondary school, that four full years were justified.[16]

Increasingly scholars from other social science disciplines began to challenge the value of history in the pre-collegiate curriculum and to express doubt that history was the best means to a civic education. Historians themselves were divided over the extent to which the study of history promoted good citizenship. Whereas the report of the Committee of Seven had been unanimous and certain of the relationship between history and civil government, the Committee of Eight, only eight years later, was badly divided on the subject of promoting citizenship through the study of history.[17] Turning its attention to the elementary curriculum, the AHA's Committee of Eight reported on a properly conceived history curriculum for the elementary schools in 1906.[18] While some on the committee continued to believe that the study of history was an important element of civic education,[19] many others remained unconvinced.[20]

History, it was argued, was helpful in understanding contemporary problems in government and a way to instill patriotic values. James Sullivan, a leading voice in the debate about the

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[16]"Committee of Seven," AHA, 501-502.

[17]"Report of the Conference on the Teaching of History in Elementary Schools" by James Alton James, chairman in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1906*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1908), 61-104.

[18]"History in the Elementary Schools," AHA, 61-104.

[19]See, for example, the remarks of H.P. Lewis, "History in the Elementary Schools," AHA, 90.

[20]See, for example, the remarks of James Sullivan, "History in the Elementary Schools," AHA, 97-100.

proper place of civics in the curriculum, doubted that patriotism, even in the elementary school, should be a part of a properly conceived history curriculum and advocated instead for a comparative view of governments through historical study.[21] Charles Eliot, president of Harvard University, claimed that overdoing patriotism led to "bumptiousness" and should be avoided.[22] From the remarks of committee members appearing at the end of the report in 1906, civic education achieved primarily through historical study was loosing ground.

A dispute inside the discipline also had an effect on the ways historians viewed civic education. Many young historians began to challenge the paradigm of history as being the static and scientific record of the past. Instead of focusing on important political developments, James Harvey Robinson's influential *The New History* suggests that history and historians broaden their view of history to capture and reconstruct important developments in society at large.[23] Robinson embraced recent advancements in the social sciences and called for historians to use new tools and information now at their disposal in writing about the past.[24] Current historiography was incapable of its most important goal--helping people understand more about themselves and the "problems and prospects of mankind."[25] While Robinson believed that the "new history" contained intellectual ideas tremendously valuable to society, he did not specify its role as a

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[21]"History in the Elementary Schools," AHA, 97-100.

[22]"History in the Elementary Schools," AHA, 96-97. "Bumptiousness" means domineering or overly self-assertive.

[23]James Harvey Robinson, *The New History*, (Ann Arbor, MI: The Macmillan Company, 1912).

[24]Robinson, 24.

[25]Robinson, 17.

contributor to civic education.[26] The inclusion of and increased attention on social history, at least for Robinson, was justified in terms of social and personal value rather than civic.

By 1912 the AHA had conceded that the civic purpose of education, of which history was still a large part, could also be achieved through other means.[27] The Committee of Five of the AHA, convened in 1907, picked up were the 1898 Committee of Seven had left off--in the secondary school. The Committee of Five recognized the need to study some topics associated with government outside the boundaries of history--especially those topics related specifically to the state or local government.[28] The report reiterated, although not as forcefully, the recommendations of the Committee of Seven:

> We still think, however, that much of what is commonly called government as distinguished from history can and should be taught as a part of the history course. . . . A proper and wise correlation, a suitable and just treatment of American history, must have the result of giving clear pictures of actual institutions of government and clear ideas of their workings.[29]

The message of the Committee of Five appears to be that much of what is commonly referred to as government should be a part of the course in history; however, a separate course in government was desirable for a few issues of a local nature that seem outside the boundaries of an ordinary history course. Still, it maintained that a prerequisite for understanding the problems and issues facing the current government, was to be found in a thorough study of history.

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[26]Robinson, 25.

[27]"The Study of History in the Secondary Schools. Report of the Committee of Five," by Andrew McGlaughlin chairman, in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1910*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1910), 209-242.

[28]"History in the Secondary Schools," AHA, 49.

[29]"History in the Secondary Schools," AHA, 49.

Civic Education Through the Study of Modern Government

The strongest early challenge to history as the leading champion of civic education came from several political scientists. Interest in the primary and secondary curriculum, particularly in the civic purposes of the curriculum, began for the American Political Science Association (APSA) at its second annual meeting, in 1905. A political science professor form the University Minnesota, W. A. Schaper, alarmed at the civic ignorance of one of his students, conducted a survey that was intended to demonstrate the level of civic understanding of college students prior to their first course in political science.[30] Schaper's test asked students to identify and describe basic processes through which their local, state, and national government operated. Like all subsequent interpretations of surveys designed to test "what students know" about civics,[31] Schaper concluded that prior to their admission to college, students did not understand rudimentary operations of their local, state, or national government and therefore needed increased study in American government before entering college.[32]

Alarmed at the findings of Schaper, the newly organized APSA formed a committee of its own to investigate the status of the study of government in the schools and to make

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[30]W.A. Schaper, "What do Students Know About American Government, Before Taking College Courses in Political Science," in *Proceedings of the American Political Science Association at its Second Annual Meeting 1905*, (Lancaster, PA: Wickersham Press, 1906), 207-228.

[31]See, for example, *The National Assessment of Educational Progress, The Civics Report Card* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1988); *The Hearst Report. The American Public's Knowledge of the U.S. Constitution: A National Survey of Public Awareness and Personal Opinion* (New York: The Hearst Corporation, 1987).

[32]Schaper, 227.

recommendations.[33] This committee, reporting in 1908, denied the value of studying American history and government together.

> It does not follow that because government is largely an outgrowth from history that a boy in high school should study them at the same time. The steam engine is also an outgrowth from history, so is the alphabet. No teacher would therefore contend that these must be studied in connection with history to be understood.[34]

The importance of a properly conceived civic education program was in teaching not only future citizens but, more importantly, future judges, lawyers, and statesmen. The country needed and democracy demanded a core of people who were knowledgeable of the machinery of government. This goal could best be achieved, according to the Committee of Five of the APSA, through a separate course in government--at least in the high school.[35]

While the report of the Committee of Five may represent some form of consensus on civic education among political scientists, not all political scientists agreed with the conception of civic education offered by the Committee of Five. Some political scientists were beginning to expand their conception of civic education. Jeremiah Jenks, an active participant in the debates concerning civic education and a professor of political economy and politics at Cornell, outlines a clear statement on civic education in *Citizenship and the Schools*.[36] Jenks viewed the civic purposes of education, especially in the elementary grades, as a concept that should be used to

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[33]"Report of the Committee of Five of the American Political Science Association on Instruction in American Government in Secondary Schools," in *Proceedings of the American Political Science Association at its Fifth Annual Meeting 1905*, (Lancaster, PA: Wickersham Press, 1909), 219-261.

[34]"Committee of Five," APSA, 232.

[35]"Committee of Five," APSA, 251-253.

[36]Jeremiah Jenks, *Citizenship and the Schools* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1906).

unify the curriculum.[37]

In Jenks' view, civic education was a part of an appropriately constructed social education.[38] To formulate possible solutions to social problems one needed to identify and understand the problems of society.[39] For Jenks, the clear purpose of one's civic education, or of education generally, was "to secure better service for the state, greater willingness and intelligence in curing social evils, and greater zeal in promoting the social good."[40] A large part of that understanding could be achieved through a thorough study of politics and government. Added to this substantive component was instilling a "true patriotism" that could best be developed by pointing out the country's failings as well as successes.[41] Jenks believed that many of the disciplines, including history, could be made more lively and useful if the goal of citizenship was at the forefront in the minds of teachers.[42] Knowing the country's history or its political machinery was fine, but through those lessons students must develop a value or devotion to the public good.[43]

An expanding conception of civic education became increasingly popular for many political scientists. Believing that the study of current government and the political problems of contemporary society represented a significant place in the curriculum, the APSA remained

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[37]Jenks, vii. Jenks believed that all subjects in the curriculum contained elements that could be used to develop good citizenship. The disciplines could be made more relevant to the lives of students if substance of the disciplines were tied to citizenship.

[38]Jenks, 6.

[39]Jenks, 18.

[40]Jenks, 6.

[41]Jenks, 20.

[42]Jenks, 84-87.

[43]Jenks, 84-95.

involved in discussions that focused on the civic education of pre-college youth. In 1916 yet another committee, the APSA's Committee on Instruction, reported on the current status of government in the schools and made recommendations for improved civics instruction. By 1916, the debate as to whether civic education was in large measure a function of history appears, at least for the APSA, to have ended.[44] The first section of the report presents "Stages in the Advancement of Civic Instruction."[45] The lowest and earliest level of civic instruction was study of the Constitution through history and rote memorization. The next stage advanced civic education through the study of American history and civil government together. The report identifies two main purposes for the study of civic relations:

1. To awaken a knowledge of the fact that the citizen is in a social environment whose laws bind him for his own good.

2. To acquaint the citizen with the forms of organization and methods of administration of government in its several departments.[46]

By 1916 the pinnacle of instruction in civics was something the committee referred to as "community civics."[47]

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[44]*The Teaching of Government. Report to the American Political Science Association By the Committee on Instruction* by Charles Grove Haines, chairman (New York: Macmillian Company, 1916). Unlike the earlier report issued by the APSA's Committee of Five, this report does not allude to a disagreement with the AHA or its various committees. Pages 1-27 provide an historical overview of the developments of the various committees of the American Historical Association and its regional organizations, the National Municipal League, and the American Political Science Association.

[45]*The Teaching of Government*, 1-6.

[46]*The Teaching of Government*, 27.

[47]Community civics can be viewed as a synthesis of the conceptualizations presented throughout this paper and as such will be described and analyzed near the conclusion.

Civic Education Through the Study of Society

For sociologists such as Lester Frank Ward, David Snedden, Edward Ross, and Albion Small, civic education was not the exclusive province of history, political science, or some combination. Civic education was a part of a broader construct--social education. Social education like civic education is and was a nebulous term. It was in providing meaning to the term social education that the sociologists would have their most lasting influence on the concept of civic education and on education generally.

Many sociologists were convinced that education, especially in the 19th century, had focused entirely too much on liberal, laissez-faire principles and not enough on society.[48] Although the American Sociological Society did not convene committees to investigate practical matters of the school curriculum,[49] many sociologists were interested in the potentialities of education as a way to direct or influence positive social change.[50] The social efficiency movement in education was at least partially, if not predominately, spawned by the thinking of leading sociologists.[51] Ross's influential *Social Control* makes clear the potentialities of education in directing and influencing social aims and behaviors.[52] Social efficiency meant that schools were to train students for their

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[48]See, for example, Lester Frank Ward, *Applied Sociology* (Boston: Ginn, 1906), 13-17.

[49]However, for one attempt at creating a curriculum for the elementary school which emphasized social study see John M. Gillette, "An Outline of Social Study for Elementary Schools", in *Papers and Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Society*, vol. 8 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1915), 101-119.

[50]See, for example, Edward Alsworth Ross, *Social Control* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1901).

[51]The social efficiency movement in education was not, of course, limited to sociologists. Many educators, for example Franklin Bobbit and W.W. Charters, participated in the effort to redirect the focus of education on social rather than individual ends.

[52]Ross, 163-179.

proper place in society. Because the roles of citizens often differed, sometimes dramatically, it made sense that students' education would differ as well. Many traditional subjects and disciplines could not respond to their utility in promoting social efficiency. Whereas the education of the past had focused on the development of the individual; the education of the future would focus on the development of society. Subjects or disciplines that did not promote this end needed to be discarded or reworked.

David Snedden, arguably the leading spokesperson for social efficiency in education among sociologists,[53] attacked the utility of historical study to promote citizenship.

> Good citizenship, so far as we can now interpret it, consists in part in the habits which are in the main derived from sources other than a study of history, in part of ideals, in the making of which history and literature can contribute much, and in the possession of knowledge of present problems of such a nature as will enable these citizens, in some degree, to forecast the future,--because it is only with reference to the future that, in the last analysis, the citizen can actually act.[54]

Snedden believed that civics, history and political economy should all be parts of a properly conceived civic education. However, the study of those subjects independent of one another did not make sense. The unifier for Snedden was not history but the study of social problems which may be better understood in light of history or civics. Snedden's program for social education focused on social problems in which the students were directly invoived, directly observed, or obtained through reading and recitation.[55]

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[53]For a comprehensive analysis of Snedden's contributions to educational thought generally and to the social efficiency movement specifically, see Walter H. Drost, *David Snedden and Education for Social Efficiency* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1967).

[54]David Snedden, *Problems of Secondary Education* (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1917), 207.

[55]Snedden, 214.

Valuative Civic Education

While some scholars were attempting to identify and emphasize the substance of a properly conceived civic education program, another group, consisting mainly of educational practitioners, stressed the importance of the values, morals, and beliefs that a civic education should instill. Certainly, content selection was important as some curricular ideas would be able to instill the values associated with citizenship better than others. Squarely in the parameters of this conceptual idea were individuals who stressed civic education as character education, moral education, or patriotic indoctrination. The valuative conception of civic education is decidedly non-neutral--there is a specific "good life" to which the schools should be aiming. The question remained, which American values and beliefs should be instilled?

Civic Education Through Moral and Character Education

As the debates about civic education in the social sciences increased in intensity, many educators were uncomfortable with perceptions of civic education as merely a function of academic study. In other words, they were concerned that students may be very successful students of history or government without learning the values or spirit of democracy that were at the heart of good citizenship. Throughout the period under investigation, the National Municipal League (NML) offered a forum for a variety of people to discuss possible civic education programs for the schools. Educational practitioners, who had not been given a strong voice in either the AHA or the APSA, were welcomed participants at the NML's annual meetings. Although the practitioners themselves disagreed about the specific nature of civic education, they seemed compelled to remind the disciplines that civic education was more than just content.

Frederick Luqueer, an elementary school principal from Brooklyn and frequent presenter at the NML's meetings, conveyed the feelings expressed by many others:

> But [civic education is] not in mere intellection. . . .We must have the moral and loving thought,--the first love which is the highest wisdom, which alone may give us God, freedom, and immortality. It is this thought that appreciates and feels the significance of, the individual and the State. It is from this thought that must spring any useful treatment of man as citizen of nation, state, or city.[56]

Like the AHA and the APSA, the NML convened its own Committee on Instruction in Municipal Government which reported in 1905. While following the structure of the committees on civic education that had preceded it,[57] the NML's committee offered suggestions that were dissimilar to either. Both the elementary and high school programs proposed by the committee placed substantive focus on the content that was closest to the student--the local government.[58] Still, the substance was to center on instilling the values of good citizenship. Civic and moral education was not the province of any discipline in the elementary program. Rather, the committee reported that "moral and civic instruction should permeate the entire school life of the child."[59] Instilling patriotism and civic virtue seemed to be the hallmarks for an appropriate civic

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[56]Frederic L. Luqueer, "A Tentative Program for the Teaching of Municipal Government and Civics in the Elementary School," in *Proceedings of the Chicago Conference on Good City Government and of the Tenth Annual Meeting of National Municipal League*, ed. Clinton Rogers Woodruff (Philadelphia: National Municipal League, 1904), 250.

[57]The committees convened by the AHA and APSA also studied the "current status" of civic education in the schools and made recommendations for improvements.

[58]The American political Science Association's various committees on the instruction in government agreed with this aspect of the proposal.

[59]William H. Maxwell and J. J. Sheppard, "Instruction in Municipal Government in Secondary and Elementary Schools," in *Proceedings of the New York Conference on Good City Government and of the Eleventh Annual Meeting of National Municipal League*, ed. Clinton Rogers Woodruff (Philadelphia: National Municipal League, 1905), 257.

education for elementary school students.[60] The high school program advocated, although not as strongly, that students learn the values associated with the "new patriotism" and the "true spirit of civic loyalty."[61]

Some historians were beginning to broaden their views of civic education to include and emphasize the values associated with civic education. Henry Bourne, a professor at Western Reserve University, produced a clear statement on civic education in a 1906 book designed as a tool to help history teachers understand more about the nature and value of their subject.[62] Bourne advocated that civic education was more than the result of substantive knowledge of history or politics.[63] The aim of instruction in civics, no matter the vehicle, was to provide students with a historical knowledge of social institutions, an organizational knowledge of the social institutions in their community, and a "permanent interest in public life and their sense of responsibility to their fellows."[64] Of the three aims of instruction in civics, the hallmark for Bourne was the values that were instilled as a result.[65] So long as students left school with a strong commitment to community and their fellow citizens, even if they possessed little substantive knowledge, their instruction in civics would have been successful.

Bourne also believed that discipline in the school environment represented an opportunity to

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[60]Maxwell and Sheppard, 257.

[61]Maxwell and Sheppard, 278.

[62]Henry E. Bourne, *The Teaching of History and Civics in the Elementary and Secondary School* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1905), 93-105.

[63]Bourne, 99.

[64]Bourne, 104-105.

[65]Bourne, 99.

teach the appropriate values of citizenship.[66] Through discipline, students could learn social duty, obedience to the law, altruism, and the value and importance of "firmness" in government.[67] Bourne also viewed student participation in student clubs and associations as ripe opportunities to instill the values associated with citizenship.[68]

At the Cincinnati Conference of the NML in 1909, one session was devoted to discussing "instruction in civics" at both the elementary and high school levels.[69] Representatives of local government, teachers and administrators from schools, and professors from university and normal schools gathered to discuss civic education. Arthur Dunn, who later chaired the National Education Association's Committee on the Social Studies in 1916, was one of the university representatives who attended the session.[70] Dunn made clear that while the substance of civic education is important, the ultimate aim is in developing a civic consciousness that will lead to the habits of good citizenship.[71] Most practitioners and scholars who advocated the teaching of morals and values in concert with civic education offered few specifics for the values or morals to be developed, suggesting only "our values" or the "habits of good character."

For those who chose to identify specific values associated with civic education, the values

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[66]Bourne, 100.

[67]Bourne, 100.

[68]Bourne, 100.

[69]"Tuesday Afternoon Session," in *Proceedings of the Cincinnati Conference on Good City Government and of the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of National Municipal League*, ed. Clinton Rogers Woodruff (Philadelphia: National Municipal League, 1909), 24-41.

[70]As a graduate student Dunn studied under Albion Small at the University of Chicago. Small's influence, and therefore a focus on social efficiency, can be seen in his conception of civic education. See Arthur William Dunn, *The Community and the Citizen* (Boston: D C. Heath & Company, 1907).

[71]"Tuesday Afternoon Session," 32-33.

are mostly related to a classical conception of civic virtue.[72] In other words, citizens, while enjoying individual liberties, also had duties and obligations to the common good that outweighed their individual desires. Good citizens loved their community, country, and society enough to conform to the duties and responsibilities that citizenship required. The focus seems to be on those values that would enable, if not require, responsible and positive participation in society. The general value that guided the selection of others was to instill in students the value of community above individual self-interest. Honesty, duty to community and government, loyalty, and firmness of character were values that were, implicitly or explicitly, central to this goal.

Civic Education Through Patriotic Indoctrination

As both immigration and the importance of civic education increased, scholars and educators continued to discuss the appropriate educational program for newly arrived immigrants.[73] Although the general education of immigrants was related to a variety of factors (e.g., language acquisition, hygiene, familiarity with American foods), the civic education of immigrants rested primarily with instilling the values associated with "good citizenship."[74] The emphasis in

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[72]See, for example, George Brecht, "The Public School and the New American Spirit," in *The Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Fifty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the National Education Association* (Washington, DC: The Association, 1916), 935-940; Samuel Hamilton, "Has the Product of Our Schools Reasonable Fitness in Scholarship and Personal Qualities for Citizenship?" in *The Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Forty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the National Education Association* (Washington, DC: The Association, 1907), 181-194.

[73]For a discussion of the education of adult immigrants see Ben Blewett, "The Education of Adult Immigrants," in *The Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Fifty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the National Education Association* (Winona, MN: The Association, 1915), 439-445.

[74]See, for example, Helen Marsh Wixson, "The Cause of Education," in *The Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Fifty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the National Education Association* (Winona, MN: The Association, 1915), 83-86.

educating immigrants was on instilling a "love of country."[75] For some, the civic education of immigrants translated into the Americanization of immigrants. Broadly constructed, Americanization meant instilling the values and traditions of the United States. Prerequisite to Americanization, for many, was eliminating the values and traditions of the "fatherland."[76] The Pledge of Allegiance, patriotic celebrations in school, singing of the Star Spangled Banner, and flag waving were all parts of civic education for immigrants.[77] Although in a minority position, a few voices rose up against civic programs for immigrants that rested, at least partially, on a rejection of the customs and traditions of their homelands.[78]

Practical/Participatory Civic Education

Another conception of civic education prevalent in the writings of educators prior to 1916 was primarily concerned with students learning and participating in practical components of democracy. To be sure, practical civic education required both substance and values. However, a successful civic education program was one that emphasized student involvement in the democratic process--one that allowed students to live and learn at school more democratically. Advocates of this position stressed the importance of democratic school organization and student involvement in the decisions of the school as well as student involvement in community

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[75]Wixson, 8.

[76]See, for example, Julia Richman, "The Immigrant Child," in *The Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Fifty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the National Education Association* (Winona, MN: The Association, 1915), 113-121.

[77]Richman, 117.

[78]See, for example, Brecht, 938. "Critical observers of social heredity point out what must be very apparent to anyone who analyzes the problem presented by the fact that a man deeply and truly disloyal to his own folk and culture is not likely to become a deeply and truly loyal American."

organizations. The best way to achieve the substance or values of a properly conceived civic education resided in allowing students to become a part of the democratic process. Student participation in social institutions was both a means and an end to one's civic education.

Civic Education Through Democratic School Organization

For adherents of participatory civics, the logic was simple. The best way to prepare students for democratic self-government was to allow them to practice democratic self-government. Civic education in a democracy could best be achieved through a *democratic education*. As early as 1897, C.C. Van Liew a professor at Illinois State Normal School, argued for a more democratic school organization.

> . . .the spirit in which the school, as a social community, is organized, and that organization maintained, may contribute greatly to the cultivation of those habits that make for good citizenship. . .There are countless opportunities in the schoolroom for the exercise of the spirit of cooperation, and the care of the school as a public property brings the child at once in vital contact with his own civic responsibilities.[79]

Perhaps as a result of increased interest in civic education, articles began appearing in educational publications to illustrate the value of student self-government.[80] School laws, necessities like the laws of society, would be less imposing on students if they took an active role in the development and enforcement of those laws. The authors argued that schools, particularly

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[79]C.C. Van Liew, "Training for Citizenship," in *The Third Yearbook of the National Herbart Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1897), 121-122.

[80]See, for example, Henry Neuman, "Moral Values in Pupil Self-Government," in *The Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Fifty-Second Annual Meeting of the National Education Association* (Winona, MN: The Association, 1913), 41-45; Richard Welling, "Self Government in Secondary Schools," in *The Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Fifty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the National Education Association* (Winona, MN: The Association, 1915), 109-113.

secondary schools, were organized more like aristocracies than as democracies.[81] How could students learn civic education in an environment that was undemocratic? Proponents called for students to have a real stake in the decisions of the school. Students in democratically organized school could vote, hold office, make laws, and decide penalties for classmates.[82]

At the zenith of procedural or practical conceptions for civic education was the "school-city movement" and Wilson Gill.[83] Gill originated a school-city in Germantown, Pennsylvania after coming to the realization that "citizenship is a practical art, and ought to be taught in a practical, systematic, scientific, and direct way."[84] The difference between the school-city movement and others who called for a more democratic school organization is in the intensity of democratic participation. The school-city model called for every student to hold an elected or appointed office in the organization of the school.[85] Students were given real power to appoint, dismiss, and generally direct the school.[86] Teachers and administrators did not treat students as junior assistants in making decisions; the students made decisions that carried the force of law. The various school-cities (classrooms) in a school constituted a school-state and another level of political machinery. Gill even envisioned school-states coming together to form an international

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[81]Welling, 110.

[82]Neuman, 42.

[83]At the conclusion of Gill's presentation, several administrators discussed the merits of the school-city model and its effectiveness and value in their school. It seems many schools adopted, at some level of intensity, the school-city model. See Wilson L. Gill, "Child Citizenship and the School City," in *The Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Forty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the National Education Association* (Winona, MN: The Association, 1908), 285-294.

[84]Gill, 285.

[85]Gill, 287,288.

[86]Gill, 288.

level of political organization.[87] The movement was at least large enough to attract the attention of former Commissioner of Education William Torrey Harris who condemned Gill and the school city movement for teaching the "disreputable practices of ward heelers."[88]

Civic Education Through Positive Social Interaction

Although not an explicit advocate of the school-city movement, John Dewey's conception of civic education, to the extent it could be labeled as such, might also best be described as pragmatic or practical. Dewey rarely mentions the terms civic education or citizenship education in his writing even though the open-ended purpose of education was, for Dewey, a more democratic society. Dewey's clearest statement on civic education prior to 1916 can be found in *Moral Principles of Education*.[89] Dewey did not like to separate civic education from any other aspect of education because the entirety of the child's education helped to develop him or her as a good citizen.[90] Citizenship was interwoven into all the social relations of the child. Civic education was a part of the child's relationships as members of a family, a neighborhood, a church, a city, or any other social organization in which a child was involved. The only moral aim of education was "participation in social life."[91] To accomplish this, students needed a broad

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[87]Gill, 288.

[88]As cited in Gill, 289.

[89]John Dewey, *Moral Principles of Education* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1909), 7-17. In writing the book, Dewey borrowed heavily from an earlier work, "Ethical Principles Underlying Education," in *The Third Yearbook of the National Herbart Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1897), 7-34.

[90]Dewey, 9.

[91]Dewey, 11. Although Dewey viewed education as one way that children participate in social life, his conception of social education differed from that of the sociologists mentioned earlier. Dewey warns against merely preparing children to be efficient members of society or "for any fixed station life." To this end, Dewey would have been opposed to the kind of education proposed by David Snedden--providing different levels and kinds of educations

education in art, science, and history, as well as help in developing the "habits of serviceableness."[92] Dewey places special emphasis, in a democracy, on an education that would allow children to assume leadership and be self-directive.

For Dewey, "the only way to prepare for social life is to engage in social life."[93] The school, as one social institution in the life of a child, should be an embryonic community in which students are able to form positive social relationships.[94] If the school helped students to better understand their social experiences--to brake down the barriers that kept them from knowing--then people could potentially reconstruct society in some more favorable direction in the future. For Dewey, it was as difficult or impossible for students to learn how to participate in social life without participating in social life as it would be for students to learn how to swim without going near water.[95]

Civic Education as Community Civics

The various perspectives of a properly conceived civic education began to coalesce around a theme that was pragmatic and provided for both the substance and values of good citizenship. The community civics movement represents an organic synthesis of the ideological perspectives of civic education prior to its creation. Community civics contained strands of thought from many perspectives while adding a concentration on community problems, not necessarily political ones,

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for different students based on where they would likely end up in society.

[92]Dewey, 10.

[93]Dewey, 14.

[94]Dewey, 14.

[95]Dewey, 13-14.

nearest the student

Attempts at synthesis predate the coining of the term "community civics". Michael M. Davis, secretary of the People's Institute in New York, presented a paper at the NML's annual conference in 1909 that attempted to bring together various constructions or points of emphasis in civic education.[96] Davis complained, as others had before him, that constructions of civic education were unnecessarily narrow.[97] For Davis, civic education contained a definitive substantive component that included information drawn from history (to the extent that history illuminated current problems in government or society), sociology, and political science; a valuative element that "effects [sic] the pupil's will as well as intellect"; and, a practical element that stressed "activity or function" of government over structure.[98] The laboratory of the civic education program, for Davis, was the community in which the child lived.[99]

Although not using the term "community civics," Arthur Dunn's *The Community and the Citizen* also represents an antecedent to the community civics movement. In the book's introduction, Dunn credits the thinking of John Dewey for expanding his own conception of civic education and acknowledges the valuable contributions of historian Henry Bourne and sociologist Albion Small.[100] *The Community and the Citizen*, a text intended for use in the elementary grades

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[96]Michael M. Davis, "A Next Step Towards Better Civics Teaching," in *Proceedings of the Cincinnati Conference on Good City Government and of the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of National Municipal League*, ed. Clinton Rogers Woodruff (Philadelphia: National Municipal League, 1909), 380-389.

[97]Davis, 380.

[98]Davis, 380-381.

[99]Davis, 381.

[100]Dunn, iii-v.

and the first year of high school, expands the concept of civic education and focuses it on the community. Dunn hoped that every chapter of the book would make a "vivid impression on the consciousness of the child" that would enable the child to form a meaning of "community and his relationship to it."[101] The book also accommodates the social sciences by including substantive elements drawn from political science, sociology, economics, and history.[102] While Dunn clearly stresses the development of the child's relationship to and participation in the local community, the book also develops student relationships at the state and national level.[103]

Along with presenting a synthesis of perspectives with regard to civic education, popularizing the term "community civics" was apparently one of the first major results of the Committee on Social Studies.[104] An early attempt to define community civics came from Thomas Jesse Jones, chairman of the committee. Jones characterized community civics as a program "intended to acquaint students with the civic conditions in their own community."[105] Although the concept is not fully developed by Jones, community civics stressed student involvement in the community and knowledge of the functions (as opposed to structure) of government closest to the

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[101]Dunn, *Community and Citizen*, iv.

[102]While substantive elements can be found throughout the book, Dunn also devotes entire chapters that more or less center on one of the social sciences. See, for example, Dunn, *Community and Citizen*, 34-42 (sociology), 109-227 (political science); 228-238 (economics); and, 1-6 (history).

[103]Dunn, *Community and Citizen*. The book clearly aims at illuminating "community problems". For example, Dunn includes chapters on the community's relationship and responsibilities to health, property, business, education, beauty, religion, and government. However, Dunn also includes chapters on the students' relationship to the state and national government.

[104]Thomas Jesse Jones, *Statement of Chairman of the Committee on the Social Studies*, Bulletin #41, U.S. Department of Education (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1913), 16-28. Although the Committee on the Social Studies denies in its final report that it coined the term "community civics," it offers no suggestions for how the term developed. From the evidence I have collected, community civics became popular subsequent to the release of preliminary reports issued by the committee.

[105]Jones, 18.

student.

By 1915 the Committee on the Social Studies produced another preliminary document devoted entirely to the concept of community civics.[106] This document, produced by a subcommittee of four members, goes further in defining community civics. Like Dunn, the subcommittee recommended community civics for the elementary grades and continued through the first year of high school.[107] The specific aims of community civics were substantive, valuative, and practical. Students were to recognize the significance of community welfare, know the social agencies that help to secure community welfare, and recognize their present and future civic obligations.[108] The conception of community civics offered by the subcommittee was also pragmatic in that it stressed student participation in the affairs of the community.[109] A more encompassing conception of civic education is needed, according to the subcommittee, because narrower constructs fix students' attention on the manipulation of social machinery without focusing on the social ends that the machinery is designed to produce.[110]

In its final report to the NEA, the Committee on the Social Studies paid special attention to community civics and to the disagreements that had emerged as scholars and practitioners attempted to define civic education. For example, the report examines (1) the relationship

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[106]United States Department of Education, *The Teaching of Community Civics*, United States Department of Education, Bulletin 1915, no. 23 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1915). Committee members included J. Lynn Barnard, F.W. Carrier, Arthur William Dunn, and Clarence Kingsley.

[107]United States Department of Education, *Community Civics*, 11.

[108]United States Department of Education, *Community Civics*, 12.

[109]United States Department of Education, *Community Civics*, 14-18.

[110]United States Department of Education, *Community Civics*, 12. The committee appears to be directly responding to the problem of "rampant individualism" at the core of the sociological arguments for a new conception of civic education.

between history and civil government;[111] (2) the aim in teaching history for current understanding;[112] (3) the relationship of history or civic education to "national efficiency;"[113] (4) the concept of patriotism as an acceptable goal of the social studies;[114] and, (5) practical application of civic principles to the "students real life" through participation.[115] The committee also proposed a problems of democracy course, to be offered during the students' twelfth year, that would include elements of economics, sociology, and political science. In terms of civic education, the report of the Committee on Social Studies represented something for almost everyone.

Conclusion

Eighty years after its release, the 1916 report of the Committee on the Social Studies continues to attract the attention of social studies educators. For two decades prior to 1916 the importance of the school's civic mission gradually increased. As the social sciences and the formal study of education grew, scholars from various disciplines attempted to define their relationship to pre-college education, to the social studies, or to civic education. It was in this context that the search for modern civic education began in the United States. The conception of civic education offered by the committee contained clear substantive, valuative, and pragmatic elements. Intentionally or unintentionally, the final report of the Committee on the Social Studies

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[111] *Committee on the Social Studies*, 30-32.

[112] *Committee on the Social Studies*, 30-32.

[113] *Committee on the Social Studies*, 36.

[114] *Committee on the Social Studies*, 24-25.

[115] *Committee on the Social Studies*, 26.

represents synthesis--not consensus. The relationship between education and society or its political institutions has evaded consensus for centuries and probably will for many more.

Within the boundaries of distinct limitations, the preceding conceptual framework offers a way to view an important period in the development of civic education in the United States. To be sure, others analyzing historical evidence prior to the release of the report would no doubt modify the framework or would construct an entirely different one. To the extent that civic education remains a clear goal of the social studies and of education, a return to the roots of modern civic education might help to explain current conceptions and offer possibilities for future improvement. If the future of democracy in some way depends on the educative experiences provided by schools, then educators have a responsibility to assist in conceptualizing the substance, values, and practical experiences of an education for democracy.

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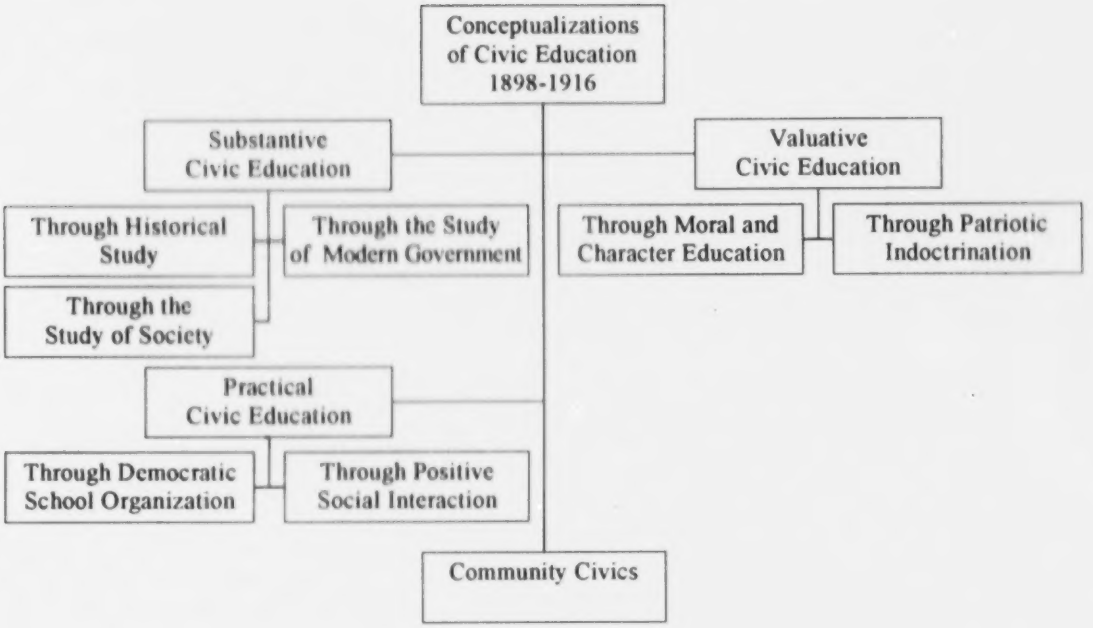
Appendix 1


Conceptualizations of Civic Education 1898-1916
Substantive Civic Education
Valuative Civic Education
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